RNA FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE HEIGHTS

RIVERVIEW Neighborhood Association

MAY ISSUE

232 Ogden Avenue – Jersey City, N.J. 07307 – (201) 798-0493

RNA IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH ANY POLITICAL PARTY, ORGANIZATION OR ELECTED OFFICIAL.

Happy Mothers Day To All RNA Mothers

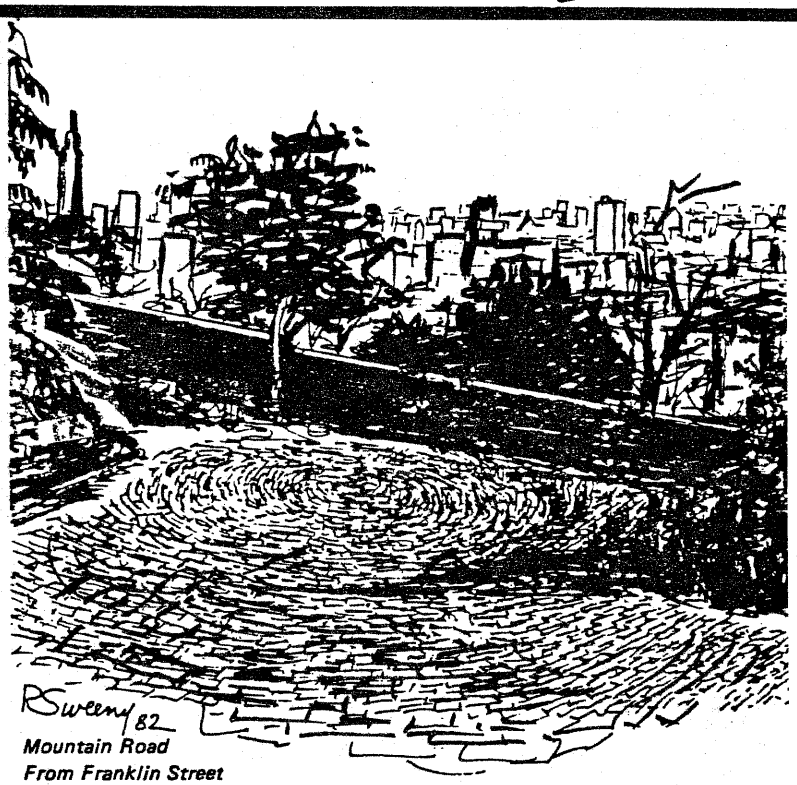
MOUNTAIN ROAD STILL IN CONTENTION

At the general meeting of RNA we were again confronted with the problem of Mountain Road. Our guest speaker Mr. Sal Lando, head of the Dept. of Streets and Sewars for the city of Jersey City, onformed the members that a new study has been launched to determine the extent of the repair required to open the road to traffic, and the cost of these repairs. Our members were somewhat dismayed to hear that it would be an additional three months before the study is completed and maybe longer before any actual progress will be made toward opening the road for use. We will keep our eyes and ears open on this issue.

Plans for the Second Annual RNA Flea Market were finalized and volunteers were called for to help clean up Riverview Park and the neighborhood in general on April 26 and 27.

Other items discussed were the Waterfront Marathons effect on the Heights area residence, abandoned and vandalized autos, a park for the Cuneo P1 end of Ogden Ave. and citizens awareness of the Jersey City ordinance concerning dog feces.

The discussion will continue on these and many other items, that affect our lives here in the Riverview Neighborhood, at the May general meeting. A party to celebrate members birthdays will follow regular business.



RSweeny 82

Mountain Road
From Franklin Street

Your presence is always welcome, so join us Tuesday, May 13th, at 7 p.m. at the Harbor View Health Care Center.

–MARIA E. TUZZO
Secretary

UNDER THE CHAIR

(This is the second in a series of columns that will inform the neighborhood about certain issues and concerns. It will be divided between fact and opinion.)

Fact: After our April meeting with Sal Lando, RNA decided to go to Michael Barnes of the Engineering Department for some straight answers about the status of Mountain Road. In a telephone conversation on April 10th, Mr. Barnes stated the following:

a) the Engineering Department is starting a 2-3 month feasibility study on Mt. Road for the purpose of finding out what it will cost the city to reopen the road;

b) the alternatives that will be investigated are 1) to reopen the road by recobblestoning it, 2) to reopen the road by asphalting the problem areas, 3) if the road should be a one or two-way street, and 4) do not reopen the road to car traffic;

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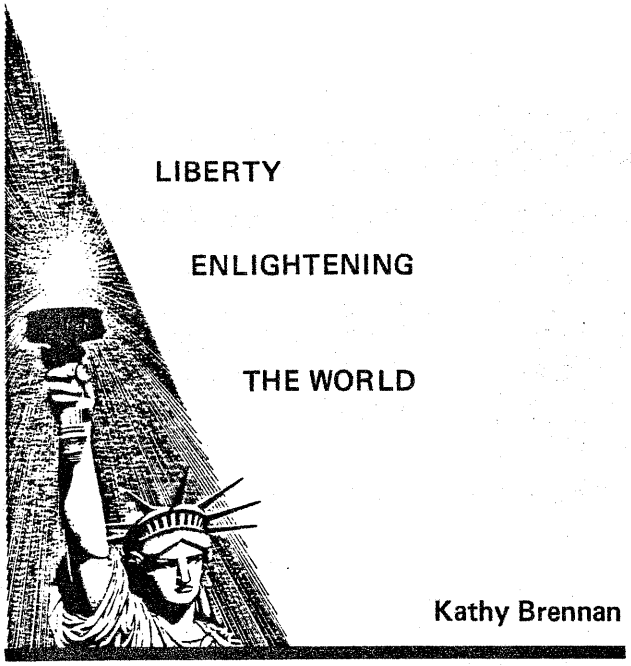

Kathy Brennan

The first sponsor of the Statue of Liberty, Edward de Laboulage, envisioned a free society and felt that America would be the leader of it. He said, "It will be the American Liberty, who does not hold an incendiary torch, but who enlightens". Frederic Auguste Bartholdi took this idea and using his mother and wife as models, created "Liberty Enlightening the World".

It was France's gift to America but even 100 years ago, the children of America were involved. Their pennies went to build the base that the statue was placed on. This year, once again, the children of America, including our own No 8 school collected money this time for her restoration.

We soon will be able to celebrate the biggest birthday bash our area has known and luckily we have front row seats. But more than a party, we celebrate what she represents. She beckoned millions to the land of opportunity, holding her torch to light the way to a new life. To those of us who traveled to the homes of our ancestors, she held the torch high to welcome us home. To the future, she continues to be "Liberty Enlightening the World" may she always hold her torch up high!

100 YEARS YOUNG

The year is 1886 -- Grover Cleveland is president of the United States; the american flag now has 38 stars; the population of the U.S.is approximately a mere 58 million; Geronimo finally surrenders in the Arizona Territory to the U.S.Calvary. Here in the Heights section of Jersey City, not newsworthy enough to make headlines, 25 German speaking families came together and petition-the Archdiocese of Newark to formulate a German national parish. On February 26, 1886 the charter was received and St. Nicholas Parish was officially founded.

One hundred years later, German is nearly a forgotten language and St. Nicholas today is a racially and ethnically diverse parish. But the values and needs of its parishioners are still the same -- a love of God and a need to come together as a community of faith and love.

St. Nicholas School, which also began in 1886 has had an extensive and ongoing role in the development of distinguished graduates. Among its numbers are doctors, lawyers, judges and college professors. Also through the guidance of the Sisters of Christian Charity many of its students went on to serve the church through the religious life, but all who passed through its doors left with a deeper and more abiding love of God and community.

This year together with its present pastor, Msgr. Joseph C. Manz the parish has come together as a community to celebrate its first one hundred years of communal life,which will culminate with a Gala Cocktail Party and Dinner Dance at the Meadowlands Hilton on April 26th. And as they settle down to begin their next 100 years may they never forget what brought those first 25 families together -- a love of God and a need to be a community of faith and love.

"CONGRATULATIONS"

Kathy Dellaglio

UNDER THE CHAIR (From page 1)

c) for the purposes of this study, he will ask the Division of Traffic Engineering to apply to the state for an extension of the original 12 month closure order;

d) his Department will look for the repair money through capital improvement funding. This is a process whereby the city will float a state certified bond issue for the funds. This is done so the money will not be taken from our already depleted city budget.

Mr. Barnes stated that he will conduct his study in an objective, non-political manner. He will make himself available to RNA when the study is completed and make a report to our group.

Opinion: Speaking of city finances, it seems that Jersey City is in for one hell of a tax increase this year probably about $35.00 or more. Last year's rate was $136.00 for each $1000.00 of assessed property. With options running out, it looks like the taxpayers will be paying at least $171.00 per $1000.

With all these waterfront deals and new development going on, were not we promised a tax relief? Someone, please explain this mystery.

Fact: On april 10th, the city council approved a controversial 15year tax abatement for the planned Newport City waterfront shopping mall. It was passed by a 4 to 3 vote (our two council representatives, Hart and Aviles voted against the abatement) with two abstentions (namely O'Reilly-Lando and Vazquez). The local merchants have organized themselves and are seeking to have this abatement rescinded because they consider it unfair competition. Another part of the deal made for this abatement was a $1.2 million advance from the developers for the city to use in this year's budget, but it is only a loan that must be repaid.

At this point, the Mayor has come out against the vote because he feels that the city merchants did not have a proper say in the matter. To further confuse the issue, the business administrator has signed the abtement after the assistant corporation council advised that it would be illegal for the council to rescind the abatement once it was granted.

RNA has attended the merchant's organizing meeting on April 16th. We plan to keep abreast of all future developments.

Opinion: On April 25th, around midnight, while walking my dog in Riverview Park, I witnessed an interesting incident. A JCPD patrol car stopped in front of the bandstand and two officers got out and walked around. They first questioned two young men hanging out behind the bandstand and made them leave the park. The officers then inspected a parked car and talked to its occupants. I hope this event will become part of the routine schedule of our local patrolmen. Thank you, gentlemen.

In light of this incident, a proposal by Councilwoman Thompson for a youth curfew is worth considering. Something must be done because Riverview Park and Palisade Avenue have become nighttime hangouts for teenagers. While admittedly this curfew will not solve the roots of this problem - making parents aware and responsible for their kids seems a good approach to it.

Opinion: On April 26th, a rainy Saturday morning, I participated in a cleanup at Riverview Park to prepare for the RNA annual flea market. Eight people swept, raked and picked up various pieces of litter around the bandstand. Besides the loads of broken beer bottles and crushed soda cans, we found empty drug paraphernalia, condoms and what I consider the treasure - a stolen car radio (unfortunately destroyed beyond repair).

An interesting sidebar to this event, was that two neighborhood youngsters saw our group and joined in to clean the area. They announced that the part of the Park at Ogden and Griffith was their playground and they wanted to keep it clean. From the mouths of babes.....

Opinion: In last month's column, RNA invited Councilman Hart to

(Continued onpage 4)

UNDER THE CHAIR (Cont'd from page 3)

write about a problem of communication that he states exists between him and RNA. Unfortunately, we have not yet received his reply, but the invitation is always open.

Interestingly though, RNA has received some other letters from the community responding to the article. While we value this response and heartily encourage it, RNA has a policy, like other publications, that requires the respondant to identify themselves. So please, no matter what your opinion - we value it highly and promise to publish it: only, you must tell us who you are.

Opinion: Anincident occurred at last month's meeting, which I, Vito Brunetti, feel it necessary to address. At the very end of the session while discussing new busness, an environmental proposal of Anne Hart's was introduced for a vote of RNA support. Because of the time and the people involved, an argument broke out. I apologize to the organization for my behavior in that situation.

So as to prevent this type of thing from happening again, I do suggest that if a matter of importance is needed to be discussed and voted on, that it take precedence over other business. This will allow the members to have a chance to think and ask questions about it. We should not make people feel that they are being rushed into anything, especially when we are discussing neighborhood policy.

Update: The property at 215 Ogden Avenue has, since the last newsletter, begun to undergo renovation. The debris outside has been removed. Construction crews have been hard at work fixing the interior throughout April.

Update: RNA has found out that the old cement factory property on Patterson Plank Road that was auctioned off last month for a neat $300,000.00 was sold to the Ponte Recycling Co. We are now attempting to find out Ponte's plans for the land.

THE ARTS DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Over the past several years, newspaper articles have appeared covering the growth of an active arts community in Jersey City, particularly here in the Heights, whicn boasts a population of almost 270 artists. The most recent article was featured in February's issue of the Jersey Journal's "Gold Coast".

The newly formed, independent Arts Council submitted its first press release where specific goals and purposes were outlined. Founding board members of this non-profit organization are: Dan Kadish, Dean Hosell, John Hutcheson, Herb Rosenberg and Kit Sailer. These artists who live and work in the Heights have been meeting for the past six months or so to define the Council and the scope of its operation. Developing an arts center which would promote cultural activities for the community at large and financial support through grants and funds for the artists has been the main thrust of the Council. More specific goals include: acting as a promotional vehicle for local artists, monitoring and advocating a high level of aesthetic environmental development, addressing artist's issues in housing, taxation and studio spaces, facilitating exhibitions, seminars, demonstrations, performances and instruction, and publishing a newsletter.

Members are sought in all artistic disciplines. Membership will be in one of four categories: Professional, Associate, Sponsoring and Student. Inquiries about membership or Council activities should be addressed to: John Hutcheson, Public Relations Chairman, The Arts Development Council, 376 Palisade Avenue, Jersey City, (201) 659-7362.

Two general meetings were held in March and April. New members brought selections of their work and had an opportunity to meet each other as well as become familiar with the Council. As a result of all this activity, the first official show will take place at 471 Palisade Avenue, Sunday, May 4 from 1pm-4pm, Wednesday, May 7 from 6pm-8pm, Saturday, May 4 from 1pm-4pm, May 11 from 1pm-4pm. Exhibiting artists will be: Dean Hosell, DAn Kadish, Herb Rosenberg, Kit Sailer, Risa Gerber, Anatoly Antohin, Bill Barrell, David Bruzga, Sharon Duffy, Lee Levine, Brian McCarty, Ann Neumann, Kate Notman, Anneke Prins-Simons, Robert Smith, Sr. Joan Steans and Alison Weld.

The Jersey Journal is also sponsoring a studio tour on May 11. The first stop will be 471 Palisade Ave. where directions to the other studios will be made available.

It is the sincere desire of the Council and participating artists to have the support and involvement of the neighborhood in this venture. In all our mutual efforts to improve the quality of our lives, this first show is a beginning of what will hopefully develop into an ongoing process that is making Jersey City a culturally vibrant and exciting place to live.

—R.S. Gerber

LOCAL ARTISTS OBLIGE THE WHITE HOUSE

The lady on the phone was pleasantly businesslike. She was calling for Mrs. Ronald Reagan, she said, and would Douglas Craft and Elizabeth Harms (Mrs. Craft) be kind enough to join a group of artists being asked to decorate eggs for the annual Easter egg roll on the White House lawn?

"Is this some kind of a joke?" Doug wanted to know. But no, the lady said, these eggs would be beautifully carved wooden ones, and would go on permanent display afterwards. Doug's suspicions were finally allayed when the eggs arrived and he recognized the White House labeling.

Betty and Doug each painted two, in their own individual style as requested, sent them off and more or less forgot them.

About a week ago came a letter on White House stationary, hand stamped and signed by Nancy, expressing her delight and saying the eggs are now on permanent display in the White House Easter Egg Collection at the Smithsonian Institutions in Washington.

The Crafts still aren't quite sure how they feel about being asked to decorate Easter eggs, but they agree that at least the shape was a nice challenge.

—Margaret Sweeny

MEMORIAL DAY FETE SLATED

On Monday May 26th there will be a formal ceremony to dedicate the new community center in Pershing Field to the veterans of Vietnam. The dedication will be at 2pm, but before and after this event there will be a fair. That's right, an old fashioned fair. Complete with games, races, food and souvenirs, and lots of fun for young and old. Plus tours of the park and new center.

Committees are forming right now and volunteers are needed to aide in all aspects of the day's events. If you are interested in being a part of this marvelous day call Councilman Tom Hart or Marie Murray, his aide, at the councilman's office for specific details. Maybe you or your group would like to have a table at the fair to sell homebaked goods or candy. Perhaps you have handmade crafts or art work for sale or display.

However you decide to participate be sure to join your friends and neighbors on this Memorial Day and make it a day to remember here in the heights. The phone number for information is 547-4576.

Maria Tuzzo

(The following is a letter written by Bob Lewis and published in the Jersey Journal on April 15, 1986.)

When Glimcher proposed their $2 billion dollar Newport City project they claimed it wouldn't cost the city a dime. Now that Lefrak and Simon have taken over, the cost of the project has jumped to $10 billion. Although Lefrak and Simon are listed among the 400 wealthiest in Forbes magazine, they had to have a $40 million CDBG grant for the infrastructure and then got a $139 million low interest loan from HUD. For the 273 affordable housing units they got a 40-year tax abatement from the city council.

Now these same billionaires claim they need a Fox-Lance tax abatement for their shopping mall to make it pay, while the merchants on 440 never got a tax abatement and pay 100 percent taxes.

Seems as if all this pie-in-the-sky development is already starting to cost Jersey City money. We may be on the road to having our taxes doubled. Hartz Mountain was supposed to cut taxes for Secaucus but tripled them instead.

Who decided on the size and density of these projects? Certainly not the residents. Was it our own Redevelopment Agency or did they just give the developers carte blanche? What about mass transit, which hasn't even been addressed or what will happen to the quality of life, will it be much worse off with so much congestion?

All the housing in Newport City, except for 273 units, will be for rich New Yorkers and fancy shoppers. It will be another city within a city on tax abatement which the developers say they need in order to make it pay.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

The Lions are sponsoring a night of amateur boxing at PS #27 on Friday May 23rd 8pm. Tickets are 5.00 and can purchased at various local stores. Proceeds go to aid the blind.

St. Nicholas Bazaar

St. Nicholas parish and I extend an invitation to all of our area to come and join us at our annual bazaar, which begins on Thurs., May 15 at 4:00pm.

Come try your hand at the many wheels and games we will feature. Win a T.V., bicycle, stuffed animal, grocery basket or any of our many other prizes. And if "Lady Luck" doesn't shine on you at least come and enjoy our great variety of food -- zeppole, sausage & peppers, ices, perogies and much more.

The dates and times are:

Thursday, May 15 -- 4:00pm-10:00pm
Friday, May 16 -- 4:00pm-10:00pm
Saturday, May 17 -- 12:00pm-11:00pm
Sunday, May 18 -- 12:00pm- 7:00pm

Hoping to see you there,

Kathy Dellaglio
Bazaar Chairwoman

MEMORIES

A cobblestone street and huge trees--almost meeting overhead--that is how I remember Ogden Avenue when I was a youngster. Little did I dream of the changes I would see through the years. The section I am speaking of runs from Franklin St. to Griffith St. The cobblestones were covered with asphalt, much to the children's delight, as they could now roller skate in the street; not many cars in those days.

The beautiful trees disappeared, some by storms, and others destroyed by property owners complaining the roots were destroying their sidewalks. So many years for the trees to reach that height and then gone in such a short time. How I wish we had them here now.

River View Park was beautiful and kept immaculate. We were not allowed to walk on the grass and there wasn't any littering. A policeman was on patrol day and night and he kept everything under control. Joe "The Hot Dog Man" was stationed on the west side of Ogden Avenue, a little pushcart with a "peanut whistle" blowing--hot peanuts (5¢ a bag), hot dogs--5¢ plus an assortment of candy to delight all young children. No matter how many youngsters gathered around the wagon buying the goodies, Joe was always smiling, friendly and kind. We children loved him.

The playground area had baby swings and regular swings, see-saws, jungle bars and a miniature merry-go-round which was turned by pushing with one foot while standing on the step with the other. As it picked up speed the foot was lifted and we spun around, screaming and laughing --the "sweet, melodious" sound of children's voices. Band concerts were held in the Gazebo on Sundays, a real family day.

So many happy memories. With all of us working together we may be able to make it beautiful again.

We were one big, happy family then--neighbor helping neighbor, ready to help in sickness and trouble. Mothers gathering in each other's houses for morning coffee and a little gabfest. Many of the new people in this area are reverting to the old ways, trying to restore the area and working together. I'm proud to have you as neighbors but most of all as friends.

Marie (Dee) Ipsaro

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

A building development currently projected for our neighborhood is a new house in the empty lot at 373 Palisade Avenue, just north of Franklin St.

At the site, a developer named Peter Wisniewski wants to build a three-story, three-family building.

I went to the Urban Design and Research Office on April 16th and examined the drawings for this project. It was scheduled to come before the Board of Adjustment on April 17th, and so there was not enough time for a meeting of our committee.

The developer was asking for a variance because, with three living units, his house did not meet the requirements of our R-2 zone, which allows only two family residences.

The house is to be three stories high with a two-car garage on the first floor and an outside stair up to full floor-through apartments on both the second and third floors. A small studio apartment on the ground floor, in back of the garage, would be the building's third living unit. The apartments on the second and third floors are to have wide greenhouse-style windows. In general, the design of the street facade is simple and in good taste. It would not be a detriment to our neighborhood.

I might have drawings to show at our next meeting.

—Randy Sanford